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A PROPOSED BLUEPRINT FOR AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES TOWARDS SUPPORTING THE
AFRICAN SPACE AGENCY

Abstract

The African Union (AU) leaders ratified the decision by the AU's Executive Council to champion Egypt's bid to host the headquarters of the African Space Agency (ASA) in Cairo during their Thirty-Second Summit on February 11th, 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A key flagship of Agenda 2063, ASA is an African initiative which is aimed at coordinating and advocating for the development and use of space science to stimulate technological advancement across the African region. The collective endorsement of ASA's host is a progressive step which augments the adoption of the first African Space Policy and Strategy by the African Union Heads of State and Government on January 31st, 2016. Although the preliminary USD 10 million investment is a milestone, several factors could potentially undermine its efficacy such as the lack of national space policies and strategies in most African countries. The number of universities offering space-related courses across the continent is alarmingly low and thus universities must initiate space advocacy, promote low-cost capacity building projects and also capitalize on the United Nations (UN) Regional Centers for Space Science and Technology Education. Part I of this paper proposes low-cost capacity building projects that if adopted would introduce the next generation to basic space science and technology. Emphasis is placed on how universities could assist governments to develop National Space Acts. Part II focuses on the role of the UN Regional Centers in Morocco and Nigeria, taking into account factors of cost and integration with existing structures by proposing the incorporation of the UN Curriculum on Space Law into existing Law curriculums in African Universities. Part III comprises a case study centered on Ghana's All Nations University which is using systems engineering to build

capacity. Part IV identifies the importance of youth involvement in high-level panel discussions on space at conferences including the African Space Leadership Conference and the African Space Generation Workshop. Finally, this paper ends with some recommendations which include amongst others the urgent need for Space Law and Policy Education for Space Capacity Building in Africa.